Riverside County recognizes Agriculture as a critical and essential industry. Governor Gavin Newsom deemed Agriculture as one of 16 "critical infrastructures" during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak. For the purpose of broadly defining this infrastructure, it includes, but is not limited to, establishments engaged in growing and harvesting crops, nurseries, raising animals, managing dairy farms, producing fish and other essential agricultural commodities.

Protection guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and public health departments are changing rapidly. The agriculture community will be responsive to these changes and adjust as necessary. These guidelines are not only for farmworkers, but also for all of the individuals involved in the agriculture supply chain. Local farms already practice numerous sanitary and safety precautions for their workers and products, this advisory provides additional information related to personal hygiene and steps farm employers can take while the “Shelter in Place” and “Stay at Home” orders are in effect.

The Agriculture Worker Protection Guidelines are voluntary. The Agricultural industry is enhancing its existing food safety guidelines to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace.

Given the agricultural industry exemption, agricultural employees are being encouraged to continue to work. The food produced is essential to our health and wellbeing. Farmworkers and other agricultural employees play a vital role in feeding our great nation.

The health and safety of our all our laborers in Riverside County remains our main priority. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will follow guidance from our public health officer and government agencies, so we can provide the needed support to our members and communities alike.
COVID-19 Employee Training and Education

Training material needs to be easily readable and accessible using resources available from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and local health departments. All materials should be available in English and Spanish. Employees should be trained on the following topics:

- Related Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including:
  a.) What COVID-19 is, and how it is spread.
  b.) COVID-19 symptoms.
  c.) When and where to seek medical attention.
  d.) How to prevent the spread of COVID-19, if you are sick.
- Information on the Riverside County “Shelter in Place” or California “Stay at Home” orders.
- Include training on appropriate hand washing and hygiene practices and sanitation processes.
- When feasible, encourage alternative spacing of persons while harvesting and processing to expand the distance between individuals while conducting such activities.
- Be responsive to the personal needs of each employee.
  a.) The state has specifically indicated populations at risk to be those over the age of 65, residents and farmworkers with underlying health issues, residential care patients, and all those who care for these individuals are uniquely at risk.
  b.) Understand which of your employees this guidance applies to, consider whether there are alternative work options or if their current job can be modified to ensure precautions are in place.
  c.) Encourage sick workers to stay home by not punishing them for missing work.
  d.) Consider offering sick benefits to help prevent the spread among workers who might otherwise work out of economic necessity.
  e.) Be responsive to state guidance and respectful of their decisions related to that guidance.
- Encourage activities such as pre-assembly of cartons and pre-bagging when possible.
- Identify key processes and products and immediately cross-train employees in backup positions to be prepared when people must stay home.
- Educate and encourage employees to follow the Riverside County “Shelter in Place”, and State “Stay at Home,” order when not at work as well as all CDC recommendations.
Monitoring Employees

Observe closely all employees when they arrive to work for any signs of illness.

- If ill, tell them to contact a medical provider or physician by phone before going to the medical office, clinic, or emergency room. Another option is to contact a teledoctor.
- Employees at work that develop symptoms of being ill should be sent home immediately.
- Require workers not to come to work if they are ill.

Employee Hygiene

Stress the importance of employees’ hygiene by stressing the following:

- Employees should wash/sanitize their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds multiple times daily, including before and after work, breaks, eating, and use of toilet facilities.
  a.) If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  b.) Employees should avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  c.) Have soap or disinfectant, potable water, and single-use disposable towels available at worksites and throughout facilities.
- Employees should cover coughs and sneezes:
  a.) Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow.
  b.) Throw used tissues in the trash.
  c.) Immediately wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean their hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Employees should avoid sharing personal items with coworkers (i.e., food, dishes, cups/drinks, gloves, cell phones, hats, & bandanas).
- As much as possible, maintain a distance of six feet (social distancing) to avoid spreading illness during work activities and breaks.
- Limit personal contact and grouping within the facility and worksites and limit the number of people using common facilities at any one time.
- Follow CDC guidelines on health and hygiene as they evolve.
Restrooms & Eating/Rest Areas

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and spaces throughout the day according to CDC disinfecting protocol. This includes:
  a.) Frequently touched areas including door handles, bathroom areas, lunchroom tables and chairs, kitchen areas, shared spaces, and facilities.
  b.) Use sanitizer and/or disinfectant spray each day to deep clean: lunchroom areas, meeting rooms, time clock areas, office rooms, shipping facility, and all other common rooms and facilities.
  c.) Ensure that all bathrooms (portable and in place) are adequately stocked and serviced at regular intervals and disinfected as appropriate.
  d.) Utilize off-hour times to complete an aggressive sanitation of common areas daily.
- Stagger break and lunch times, so that social distance can be practiced.
- Provide additional seating and seating structures to allow the employees to practice six feet apart social distancing.
- Mandate all employees to wash their hands before and after lunch.
- Ensure that enough time must be allowed for frequent hand-washing.
- Strongly encourage employees to eat apart from one another.

Cold Storages, Packing Houses, and Truck Transportation

Cold Storages, Packing houses, and truck transportation facilities have many visitors throughout the day, making it a hub for possible COVID-19 spread. Therefore, the following measures need to be put in place:

- Limit visitors to those necessary for the operation(s), if possible.
- To limit exposure of employees, emphasize on-line ordering for any direct to consumer sales with outside pick-up or delivery options.
- Visitors must be approved before arriving, and employees should keep social distancing 6 feet away from any visitor.
- If possible, consider in providing outside visitors (i.e., truck drivers, USDA inspectors) with restroom facilities, hand wash stations, and waiting seating area.
- Clean and disinfect regularly touched surfaces and spaces according to CDC disinfecting protocol. This includes:
  a.) Administrative, shipping/processing facilities, and any other enclosed spaces where people work multiple times throughout the day, time clock areas, shared computers, tools, and any vehicles used at the facility (i.e., forklifts or golf cart steering wheels) and more.
- Space work and processing tables/booths accordingly to increase social distancing, when possible.
• Urge employees to be safe outside of work, and to follow the Riverside County “Shelter in Place” and State “Stay at Home” order when not at work as well as all CDC recommendations.

**Employee Transportation**

• Monitor all employees before entering the bus/van for the following:
  a.) Observer employees for any sign of illness.
  b.) If an employee is ill, ask the employee to leave immediately and to contact his/her doctor via telephone or to visit a medical facility

• Mandate that all employees need to have a face cover (masks, bandana, scarf, or any type of cloth) before and after entering the vehicle(s).

• Be considerate of social distancing recommendations when transporting employees.

• Daily clean and disinfect touched surfaces. This includes:
  a.) Seats, windows, and all interior.
References

California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety & Health Publications Unit:

Center for Disease Control

Monterey County Public Health
- https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=88095
- https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/

San Benito County Public Health
- https://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/

Santa Clara County Public Health
- https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/phd.aspx

Santa Cruz County Public Health
- https://www.santacruzhealth.org/

California Strawberry Commission
- https://www.calstrawberry.com/en.us/Coronavirus

Communication Resources

COVID-19 Prevention Poster (English):

COVID-19 Prevention Poster (Spanish):

COVID-19 Alert Poster (English):

COVID-19 Alert Poster (Spanish):